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From: CN=Richard Parkin/OU=R10/O=USEPA/C=US
Sent: Mon 6/18/2012 6:25:35 PM
Subject: Fw: Mining.com article about a peer reviewer
Jack Caldwell

FYI

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Date: 06/18/2012 09:49 AM
Subject: Mining.com article about a peer reviewer

I came across this story in my morning news search--a really pointed article about one of the peer reviewers.

<http://www.mining.com/2012/06/13/epa-pebble-mine-review-dirk-van-zyl-and-biogeochemists/>

EPA Pebble Mine review: Dirk Van Zyl and biogeochemists
 Jack Caldwell | June 13, 2012

I must return to the topic of the Pebble Mine. What is happening there is so extreme and contentious that it is setting the pinnacle (and possibly the standard) for debate about opening new mines in sensitive places.

One of the more significant events this week is the announcement of the names of those who will peer review the EPA report that says mine development poses a real risk to Bristol Bay.

If this group of individuals supports the EPA, the project is in even deeper trouble. If this group repudiates the EPA, then more hell will break loose and maybe Obama will lose the next election.

Who are the people charged with determining the fate of mining in Alaska, the future of Bristol Bay, and maybe even the pick of the next president? Here is the list of names:

David Atkins, Watershed Environmental LLC, (mining and hydrology)

Steve Buckley, WHPacific/NANA Alaska (mining and seismology)

Courtney Carothers, indigenous Alaska cultures

Dennis Dauble, Washington State University (fisheries biology and wildlife ecology)

Gordon Reeves, USDA Pacific Northwest, (fisheries and aquatic biology)

Charles Slaughter, University of Idaho (hydrology)

John Stednick, Colorado State University (hydrology and biogeochemistry)

Roy Stein, Ohio State University (fisheries and aquatic biology)

William Stubblefield, Oregon State University (aquatic biology and ecotoxicology)

Dirk van Zyl, University of British Columbia (mining and biogeochemistry)

Phyllis Weber Scannel (aquatic biology and ecotoxicology)

Paul Whitney, wildlife ecology and ecotoxicology.

I know only one, Dirk Van Zyl. I plead with him to withdraw immediately for this is not an action that will bring glory to a long academic career. He, and all the others, will now be subjected to a scrutiny worthy of a presidential candidate. I wonder how many will survive the circus?

Let me start the mud-slinging by noting that Dirk is an old friend. I took his job and desk at SRK in 1976 when he left to do his PhD on piping in soils. We worked together over the years; the project I remember best was the Bald Mountain tailings facility in Maine. The mine was never opened.

We have written a few papers together over the years (see the InfoMine Library for all of them.) I wonder if he remembers the talk/presentation that I prepared for him on the need to design tailings facilities to last for 1,000 years and more? I wonder if he is still committed to that ethic?

Now mistakes are made all the time, so I presume that his listing as a specialist in biogeochemistry is just a mistake. In fact he is a civil engineer who has been a consultant and academic and who has focussed on the tailings aspects of mining.

As an aside: what is biogeochemistry? Maybe the action of bugs changing the chemistry of rocks? They had better find somebody who knows about such things if this is an important issue.

Dirk is a personable guy who, with his still-persistent Afrikaans accent, can entertain a crowd at a conference. He makes jokes and keeps us light-hearted. He did a good job organizing last year's Tailings and Mine Waste Conference. He loves meetings and flying around the world. He knows everybody in mining and he can tell you the latest inside news of most mining ventures. He is, at heart, an optimist, and always believes the best will happen. I have seen him cringe when I have said: "No, it won't stand up; it will fail."

This peer review is, I acknowledge, just another tiny step in a great long trek. I am surprised anybody would take on the task of potentially supporting the EPA against mining. I am surprised that Dirk may have to find for the EPA and thereby alienate his many mining friends. Or did he take on this assignment in the optimistic hope of presenting a best face for mining?

We will watch and listen with interest to what he finds and what the other members of the peer review panel find. If you know any of the others, please let us have some insight into their careers, characters, writings, prejudices, and preferences. Are any of them surfers?

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